College Study Tips

## Reading a Textbook

* Read assigned chapters prior to attending class
* Before you begin, browse the headings, bold print, italics, charts, photos & end of chapter summaries
* Jot down questions while you read – bring them to class
* Look up definitions asap for terms you don’t know
* “BE” with the book – good posture, pencil ready, margin notes
* Mark first with a pencil – after reading, use a highlighter
* Refer to another book or option for clarification

## **Note Taking**

* Take notes only on page fronts during class lectures – save the back for textbook notes, examples, drawings, questions, etc.
* “BE” with the instructor – eye contact, ask questions, sit in the front
* Compare notes with a classmate (or instructor) – missing anything?
* Review notes after class & fill in the gaps when concepts are fresh
* Rework (or computer generate) your notes – organize info into a meaningful method for you
* If power points are available – print them and add more details
* Try a 3 ring binder – great for organizing all handouts, power point slides, study guides, graded homework, returned tests, etc.

## **Memory**

* Use it or lose it – browse your notes daily
* Use mnemonics (memory aids) – acronyms, rhymes, associations
* Create flash cards & take them everywhere
* Color code notes and/or flash cards, ex. definitions – yellow, processes - green
* Once you feel comfortable with the material, then study tough topics in random order
* Understand it, rather than memorize it – “cover and converse” method
* Relax - helps you absorb, retain, and recall new concepts with greater ease

## **Concentration**

* Study in a quiet and comfy location – dedicate a space to studying
* Set a study goal before you start, ex. # of pages to read or # of problems to do
* Take short breaks (5:1 ratio...study 50 minutes & break 10 minutes)
* Find ways to make “less” interesting information “more” interesting
* Identify and minimize distractions (tv, cell phone, roommate, etc.)
* Study during your peak energy times (day person? evening person?)
* Set a timer so you can monitor your progress without “clock watching”

## **Test Preparation**

* Study with a classmate or a group – use RRCC’s free tutoring!
* When you don’t understand something, get help immediately
* Do all assignments (even if it isn’t for a grade) – turn in on time
* Save all graded material for review – put in your binder
* Review your notes prior to each class as if there will be a pop quiz
* Brainstorm potential test questions - use chapter headings and subheadings - do you know the answers?
* Ensure you know test specifics if possible, ex. number/type of questions

## Miscellaneous Tips

* Engage your emotions and activate your senses when studying
* Get the “big picture” first, then determine the specifics
* Chunk information into sets of 3-5 concepts each
* Keep a notepad handy to jot down random thoughts that cross your mind
* Skim notes right before bedtime – increases information retention
* Make a determined effort to find significance in each subject, chapter, etc.
* Maintain good habits of nutrition, exercise, stress management and sleep – your brain will thank you!

## Pick & Practice

* Choose 1 or 2 ideas & try them out

Idea 1:

Idea 2:

* If they work, keep doing them! If not, pick & practice new ideas!

****

**Dana Kobold |** **dana.kobold@rrcc.edu** **| 303.914.6176 | rrcc.edu/first-year-experience**

Handout info researched and created by Dana Kobold, FYE Coordinator (Revised SP 19)